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Editorial

Durban's Art Deco heritage is being rediscovered. Following on from the 7th World Congress on Art Deco held in Cape Town, the Durban Art Deco Society (www.durbanartdeco.org), which is affiliated to the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies, managed to land the Post-Congress meeting in Durban, the epicentre of South African Art Deco.

In promoting the meeting, and the focus on Durban's Art Deco heritage in particular, Dennis Claude, who had attended the 6th World congress in Tulsa, USA, proffered a project on Durban's Art Deco for 4yr students of Architecture, a project mentored during the 2nd semester of 2002, together with the editor. The following guides are the result of Dennis's personal involvement and the students' efforts.

This is however not the first time the results of student projects on Durban's Deco are being documented. Interested readers are referred to the articles in *Plan* No. 10, 1975; *NPIA Journal* 1/1987; and the article by Dennis Claude in *NIA Journal* 3/4 1992.

Having retired after 18 years of full-time teaching in 1994, Dennis Claude has not stopped enthusing both students and the public at large for the cause of Durban's architectural heritage. I am most grateful for his continuing involvement in the education of future architects and guest-editing this issue.

Walter Peters, Editor

Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Deco came to Durban

The city of Durban is one of the busiest ports on the African continent. Lying at latitude 30° south it has a warm sub-tropical climate and is bounded by a region blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna. It has a large and polyglot population with significant percentages of people from African, Indian and European backgrounds.

The port grew under British colonial stewardship during the mid nineteenth century, and developed a conservative set of values that lasted for over a hundred years. Even today, it is half-jokingly referred to as "The last outpost of the British Empire." The prevailing atmosphere was "British" and the architecture was either in the neo-Classical tradition, as seen in the journals, or Union Style, a blend of classic and Cape Dutch elements as promoted by the Public Works Department to symbolise the recent Act of Union.

It therefore seems curious that in the year 1931, as the slump bit deeply into the economy, a strangely different building appeared in the central city. This was Enterprise Building an eight-storey apartment block and it was enriched in a way totally alien to the prevailing canons. Finished in stucco, as all Durban Art Deco buildings are, it owed nothing whatsoever to the stodgy neo-Classical or neo-Cape Dutch interpretations that were the ruling canon of the day. Rich in angular geometric relief, stylised Mayan heads and with a superb eagle form over the entrance it boasted all the motifs that were later to be labelled as classic Art Deco. But it also had stylised Roman fasces (symbols of Roman authority) framing the door, symbols the Italian Fascists adopted and who had already been in power for eight years. Could this indicate a sympathy on the part of the owner? Clearly, no one at the time could see the future and there must have been interest in what was happening in Italy. The *Natal Mercury* of July 17, 1935 had an article - "What Fascism has done for Italy - A great work of National regeneration." Ironic.

Over the following eight years numerous Art Deco buildings appeared all over the city. In the "European" section names like Manhattan Court, Broadway Court and Hollywood Court clearly indicated a source of influence. With the emphasis on

the play of light and shade upon geometric forms, and strong verticals and contrasting horizontals, they represented a new and exiting architecture. They were mainly apartment buildings that, although often described as "de luxe", seem modest by today's standards.

Apartments in Enterprise Building were advertised as "one minute from the City hall - £5.5/- per month - whilst in 1935 the recently completed Broadwindsor with its bay views offered "...two room suites de luxe with sleeping porch." Quiet, no children, servicing and, curiously in a sub-tropical

climate, with central heating, all for £8.10/- in contemporary terms.

By the mid thirties the dynamic lines and flying finials of Broadwindsor indicated that architects were beginning to look more to local imagery for inspiration. This found full expression in a number of buildings but none more so than the somewhat bizarre animal forms interspersed amongst geometric motifs on Victoria Mansions. The fish and flying lion forms and especially the vultures add a note of surrealist humour to the composition.



Griffin (top) and eagle flanked by two fasces on Enterprise Building.



Enterprise Building, 47-53 Aliwal Street, 1932.
AA Ritchie McKinlay.



The towering cranes of Broadwindsor, 7 Broad Street. Rendering by Andrew Verster on cover of NPIA Journal 4/1986.

Could this be a wry comment on an abrasive or parsimonious client?

However it was in the work of William B Barbour that sub-tropical Deco found its apotheosis. Surrey Mansions is an eight storey apartment building sited on the Berea overlooking the city. With two block-like base floors it rises a further five floors with rounded corners and finds resolution in a squared-off upper portion. Fluted giant order pilasters rise the full height to a crenellated parapet, and the openings and string courses are enriched with detailing of sensitivity and imagination. At high-level winged lions proudly survey the scene below.

In the meantime the marginalized community of Indian origin that had suffered decades of discrimination had pulled itself up from institutionalised poverty into a position where elements of economic independence were emerging. It comes as no surprise therefore to note that many of the buildings in the "Indian" quarter adopted Art Deco motifs, even those designed by "European" architects. There are charming examples like the cluster in Carlisle Street with well-scaled small blocks named



COVER MONTAGE: Clockwise from left: Surrey Mansions - 323 Currie Road; Victoria Mansions - 124 Victoria Embankment; Broadwindsor - 7 Broad Street; Vel-Vet Mansions - 51 Carlisle Street; Osman's, Moosa's Buildings - cnr Grey Street and Commercial Road; Abubaker - 162-172 Queen Street, cnr Grey Street.

Carlisle Castle and Vel-Vet Mansions which look as if they would be at home in Miami and then there are commercial blocks like Paruk Building, Jeena's Centre and Moosa's Buildings which have Art Deco motifs in a rather more original free style application sometimes incorporating novel elements borrowed from Classical or Egyptian sources. Even the modest homes of Clairwood took care to add oratory motifs of imaginative, and maybe religious properties.

Conclusions drawn from the widespread appearance of Art Deco architecture in Durban of the thirties must reflect on the possibility that it was a vehicle of disassociation from the prevailing establishment. It is likely that the promoters represented groups disenchanted by local class-consciousness, snobbery and intellectual arrogance; that they had the funds and the will to show their feelings by adopting an architecture that was in direct contrast to the established canons - a topic for further research.

World War II saw the end of an era in many ways, including the arrival and acceptance of the Modern Movement. This was supposed to be 'functional, direct, clean and undecorated.' But the urge to enrich our architecture died hard and cropped up in unexpected places. In the upheavals subsequent to the Nationalist Party victory of 1948, the Ndebele people adopted a highly characteristic architecture as a means of self-identification in an alien environment and it can be legitimately argued that this represents the re-appearance of an Art Deco architecture. The concept of using traditional tribal design was cautiously adopted by local architecture, and the mid-fifties saw the appearance of an apartment block on the sea front with decorative patterns based upon Zulu beadwork and worked in glass mosaics.

A further thirty years were to pass before architecture had worked through the "isms" up to



Crown of The Palace, 211 Marine Parade, 1990. Seitter Boyd Architects



LEFT: Bel-Aire, 151 Snell Parade, 1956. Reginald C Buck
BELOW: SBDC (Business Partners), 23 Jan Hofmeyr Road, Westville, 1984. Hallen Theron & Partners



Thokoza Women's Hostel, Grey Street. Elevation to Dartnell Crescent.

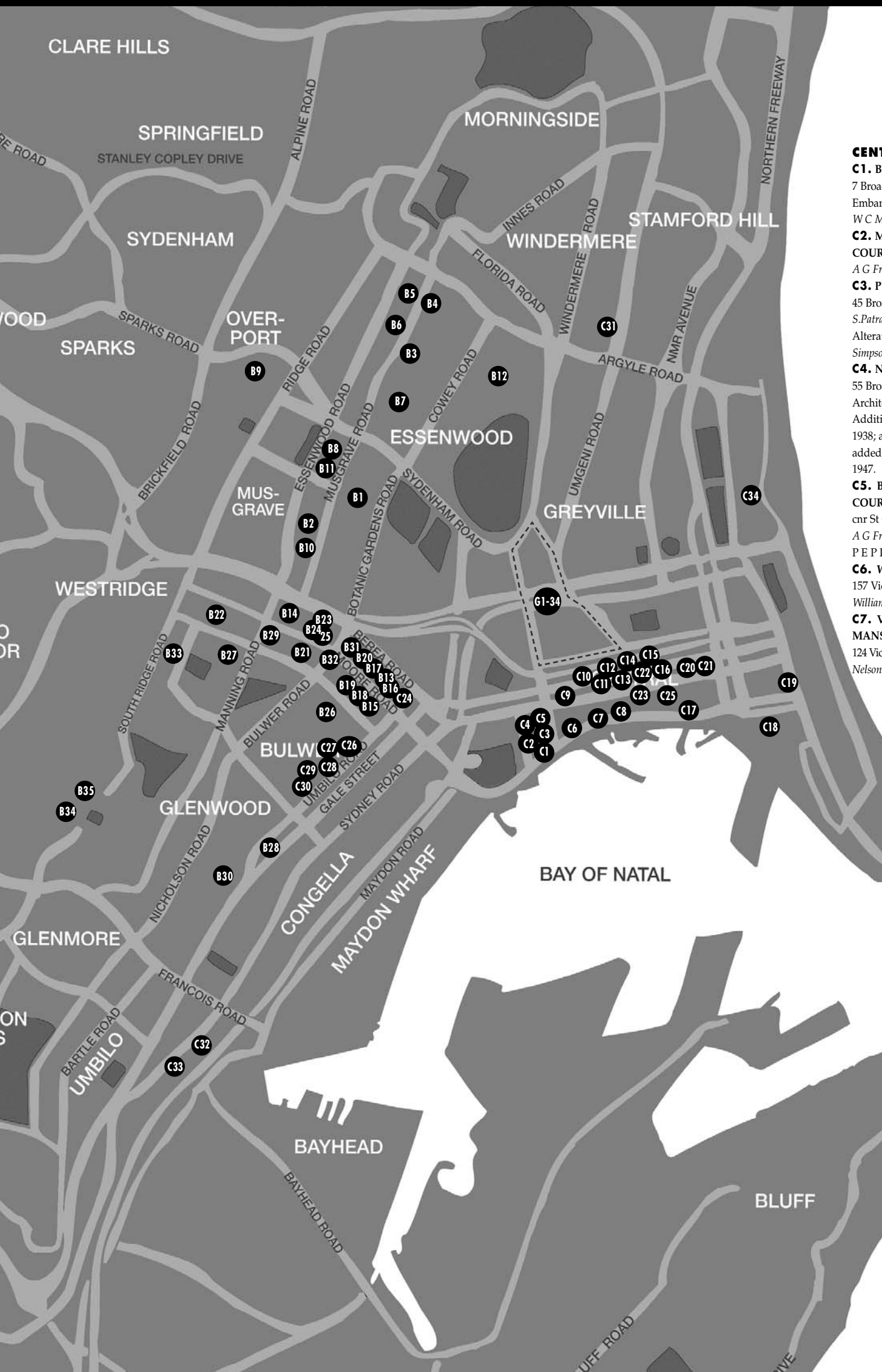
the stage where it is now becoming acceptable to add enrichment or decoration simply for the love of it. Even a hostel for indigent women in downtown Durban has cautiously added some small Deco touches, whilst in the eighties The Palace on the sea

front demonstrated a veritable plethora of structural bravura, simply as a celebration of forms in space. So the basic tenets of Art Deco, or sub-Tropical Deco as we may call it, came to South Africa, have survived and continue to develop and explore new avenues.

Interest was re-awakened in the detailing of the entrance to the SBDC/Business Partners Building and subsequently an entertainment and hotel complex near the sea front - Sun Coast Casino & Entertainment World. A good deal of creative thinking went into the process, but one thing was decided in principle: it would have an Art Deco theme! This did not mean plagiarising designs from earlier times but the creation of new themes and new topics consistent with the approaches and methods which made Art Deco such a comprehensive and vital design language.

Dennis Claude, Guest Editor

Dennis Claude presented this paper (edited here) at the 6th World Congress on Art Deco held at Tulsa, Oklahoma, 18-23 April 2001. - Editor



Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Inventory of Durban's Deco Buildings

CENTRAL DURBAN

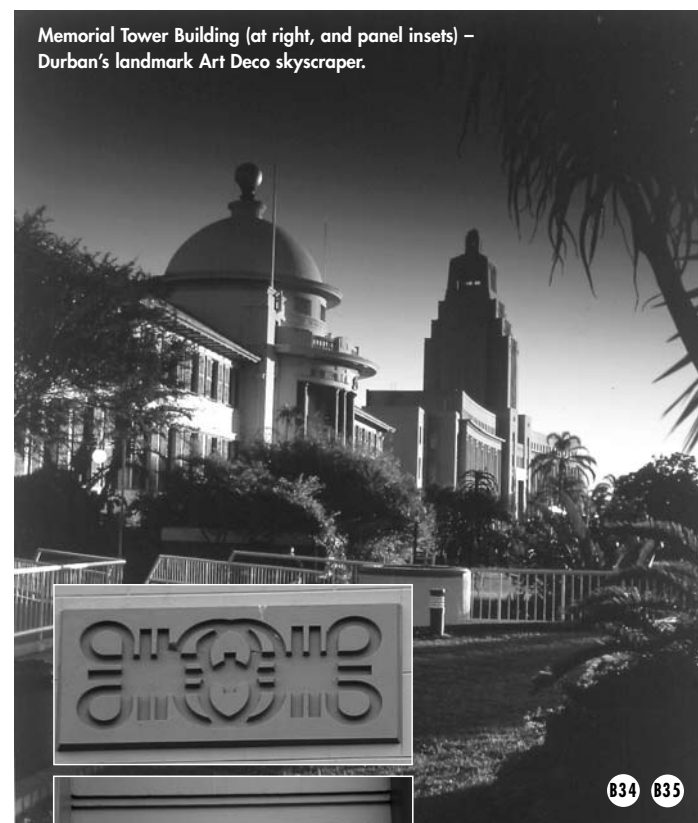
- C1. BROADWINDSOR,** 7 Broad Street cnr Victoria Embankment
W C Moffat & Hirst, 1935.
- C2. MANHATTAN COURT,** 11 Broad Street.
A G Frolich, 1937
- C3. PLYMOUTH HOE,** 45 Broad Street.
S. Patrake, 1936, for L. Moon. Alterations by Hirst & Simpson, 1962
- C4. NORDIC COURT,** 55 Broad Street.
Architect unknown, c1933. Addition by *Frolich & Kass, 1947.*
- C5. BROADWAY COURT,** 57 Broad Street cnr St Georges Street.
A G Frolich, 1934, for P E P Rorvick.
- C6. WILLERN COURT,** 157 Victoria Embankment.
William Barbour, 1937.
- C7. VICTORIA MANSIONS,** 124 Victoria Embankment.
Nelson Secombe, 1935.

- C8. ENTERPRISE BUILDING,** 47 Aliwal Street.
A A Ritchie McKinley, 1931.
- C9. MCINTOSH HOUSE,** 455-457 West Street.
- C10. BALES BUILDING,** 436 West Street.
- C11. PREFCOR HOUSE,** formerly PAYNE BROS, 398 West Street.
- C12. CHESTER HOUSE,** 398 West Street.
- C13. CLICKS,** 390 West Street.
- C14. 388 WEST,** 388 West Street.
- C15. ADAMS BOOKSELLERS,** 341 West Street.
- C16. COLONIAL MUTUAL BUILDING,** 330 West Street.
Elsworth, Hennesey & Hennesey, Sydney, 1931-33.
- C17. QUADRANT HOUSE,** cnr Gardiner Street & Victoria Embankment.
W. Street-Wilson, Architect
- C18. 25 WINDER STREET**
- C19.** 550 POINT ROAD
- C20. METROPOLE,** 106 Smith Street.
- C21. HERONMERE,** cnr Smith and Stanger Streets.

- C22. THE CENOTAPH,** Gardiner Street, on Francis Farewell Square.
Eagle, Pilkington & McQueen, Cape Town, 1921. Competition-winning entry completed in 1926.
- C23. HOLLYWOOD COURT,** 197 Smith Street.
Hobbs & Bonieux, 1937.
- C24. GARVOCK,** 10-18 Umbilo Road.
- C25. ALBANY HOTEL,** 225 Smith Street cnr Albany Grove
- C26. 26 UMBILO ROAD**
Street Wilson & Paton, 1925
- C27. ESCOMBE COURT,** 29 Umbilo Road.
- C28.** 42/44 UMBILO ROAD.
- C29. RYDER COURT,** 638 Umbilo Road.
B. Cullinane, 1936.
- C30. ARBY COURT,** 146 Umbilo Road.
William Barbour, 1940.
- C31. 677 UMGENI ROAD**
See also Nos. 677 and 687, which have notable parapets.
- C32. 374 SYDNEY ROAD**
- C33. 437-447 SYDNEY ROAD**
- C34. ALTHEA COURT** 109 Somtseu Road, cnr Snell Parade.

GREY STREET PRECINCT

- G1. B A NAIDOO'S BUILDING,** 178 Grey Street, 1937.
- G2. ABOOBAKER MANSIONS,** cnr Grey & Queen Streets, 1937.
- G3. VAGASHREE MANSIONS,** 113-115 Victoria Street, 1927.
- G4. MOOSA'S BUILDINGS,** cnr Grey Street and Commercial Road.
- G5. 222-224 GREY STREET**
- G6. 232 GREY STREET** Related to 222-224 Grey Street.
- G7. 9 SHORT STREET** Backs up G24 with arcade.
- G8. JEENA'S CENTRE,** 162-170 Victoria Street.
W J Cornelius, 1927.
- G9. SONI NATHOO DEVJEE BUILDING,** 120 Victoria Street, 1937.
- G10. 114-118 VICTORIA STREET.**
Hobbs & Bonieux, 1936.
- G11. VICTORIA COURT,** 117 Victoria Street, 1940
- G12. EMPIRE COURT,** 256-260 Grey Street cnr Beatrice Street.
- G13. AZIZ MANSIONS,** 101-103 Queen Street
- G14. EBRAHIM COURT,** 49-59 Prince Edward Street.
- G15. DOMINION COURT,** 61 Beatrice Street.
- G16. 69/71 BEATRICE STREET**
B Jeet, 1939.
- G17. 54 LORNE STREET**
- G18. SHARDA NIVAS,** 64 Prince Edward Street, 1940.
- G19. SAYED'S MANSION,** 66 Prince Edward Street.
- G20. PATEL'S BUILDING,** 67 Prince Edward Street, 1937.
- G21. 73 PRINCE EDWARD STREET**
W B Barbour, for the Hattia Trust, 1933-4.
- G22. 94 PRINCE EDWARD STREET**
- G23. 95 PRINCE EDWARD STREET,** 1935
- G24. ARBEE MANSION,** 102 Prince Edward Street, 1940
- G25. ABAD COURT,** 125/127 Prince Edward Street.
W J Cornelius, 1930.
- G26. ESSOP MOOSA BUILDING,** 129 Prince Edward Street, 1935.
- G27. HIMAT COURT,** 134/136 Prince Edward Street.
J E Jessel Drawing Office, 1942.
- G28. AVNI COURT,** 138 Prince Edward Street, 1935.
- G29. ISMAIL'S BUILDING,** 145 Prince Edward Street, 1930.
- G30. NM EBRAHIM BUILDING,** 19 Cross Street, 1931
- G31. BERIA VIEW,** 43 Carlisle Street.
- G32. MOUNT VIEW,** 45 Carlisle Street.
- G33. VEL-VET MANSIONS,** 51 Carlisle Street..



Memorial Tower Building (at right, and panel insets) - Durban's landmark Art Deco skyscraper.

- G34. CARLISLE CASTLE,** 53 Carlisle Street.
W J Cornelius, September 1940. Similar to Vel-Vet Mansions.
- BEREA NORTH**
- B1. SURREY MANSIONS,** 323 Currie Road.
Langton & Barbour (William B Barbour), 1937.
- B2. ASTRA COURT,** 163 Musgrave Road.
Roger Cooke & L T Obel, 1937.
- B3. ST AUGUSTINE'S MANSIONS,** 440 Musgrave Road.
- B4. CHEVIOT COURT,** cnr Musgrave Road & Poynton Place, 1940s
- B5. ST AUBYN COURT,** Musgrave Road, 1940's.
- B6. AINSLIE COURT,** Musgrave Road, 1940's
- B7. CONNISTON COURT,** 526 Currie Road, 1950.
- B8. CLYSEN COURT,** 48 Clyde Avenue.

- B9. MCCORD HOSPITAL,** 28 McCord Road, Overport.
- B10. LOWRY'S CORNER,** Corner Musgrave and Silverton Roads.
- B11. CARN BREA,** 238 St Thomas' Road, 1939.
- B12. JUBILEE COURT,** 63-93 Clarence Road.
- BEREA SOUTH**
- B13. 125 BEREA ROAD.**
- B14. BERIA COURT,** 399 Berea Road.
Langton & Barbour, 1937.
- B15. MOORLANDS,** 158 Moore Road.
- B16. 162 MOORE ROAD.**
- B17. STANMERE,** 175 Moore Road;
- B18. CREIGHTON,** 184 Moore Road; &
- B19. SHANNON,** 188 Moore Road.
- B20. SANTA MARIA,** 187 Moore Road.
Hobbs & Bonieux, 1951
- B21. RAYLEIGH,** 214 Moore Road
Robert Mowe, 1950.

- B22. CHELMORE,** 527 Moore Road
A. Holds (?), 1938
- B23. DEO VOLANTE,** 5 Woodburn Place, 1939-40
- B24. ALDER COURT,** 7 Woodburn Place, 1940.
- B25. PAVO COURT,** 15 Woodburn Place, 1940.
- B26. KINTYRE,** 152 Clark Road
- B27. MOUNT VERNA,** 400 Clark Road.
Obel & Frolich, 1939.
- B28. MOUNT ROYAL,** 15 Dunkirk Place
- B29. MINLEY COURT,** 138 Manning Road.
N M Grant, 1938.
- B30. ABERCORN,** 13 Sycamore Road, 1937.
- B31. CAMBORNE,** 40 Bulwer Road.
Hobbs & Bonieux, 1937.
- B32. ELLAN VANNIN,** 62 Bulwer Road
H F Sparks.
- B33. ALGWEN,** 72 Chelmsford Road
William B Barbour, 1938.
- B34. HOWARD COLLEGE,** King George V Avenue.
William Hirst, 1930.
- B35. MEMORIAL TOWER BUILDING,** King George V Avenue.
Powers & Powers, 1946.



Craig Hudson

Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Central Durban

City centres have long been associated with a show of both political and economic values, and the ostentation that often accompanies this, gave Art Deco, with its abundance of decorative detail, an opportunity for expression.

The inception of Art Deco was strongly influenced by the rapid changes in popular social culture that predominated the 'jazz-age' or the 'roaring '20s' that followed WW1, with the rapid economic changes satirically reflected by novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald. The image of wealth associated with the times and hence with the Art Deco movement is evident, for example, in the use of coins as a decorative motif.

Two buildings encapsulate the image of economic and political power, Enterprise Building at 47-53 Aliwal Street, and Colonial Mutual Building at 330 West Street. Both make use of Gothic and Romanesque derived elements, as well as chevrons associated with the jazz-age popular culture. The reference to historical styles relies on the fact that Gothic and Romanesque buildings are imbued with a sense of trust in their longevity as well as the strength that they symbolised. Add to this, the sculpted lions, a political symbol associated with the British colonial regimen of old. The symbolic simulation that occurs between the inclusion of the culturally entrenched and popular culture, hints at the notion that the architecture of financial buildings had begun to use the eclecticism of Art Deco to broaden its appeal to the public. The Art Deco building could be seen as an architectural billboard that communicated values

The use of the bird motif is widespread in central Durban, for example Victoria Mansions at 124 Victoria Embankment and Broadwindsor at 7 Broad Street. The sources of this motif are manifold, being adopted by Mussolini as a fascist symbol as well as being related to exotic tribal cultures. However, the abstraction of the Broadwindsor eagles could be more akin to the image of prestige of the spires of the Chrysler building, through their stylised image of their vertically soaring wings.

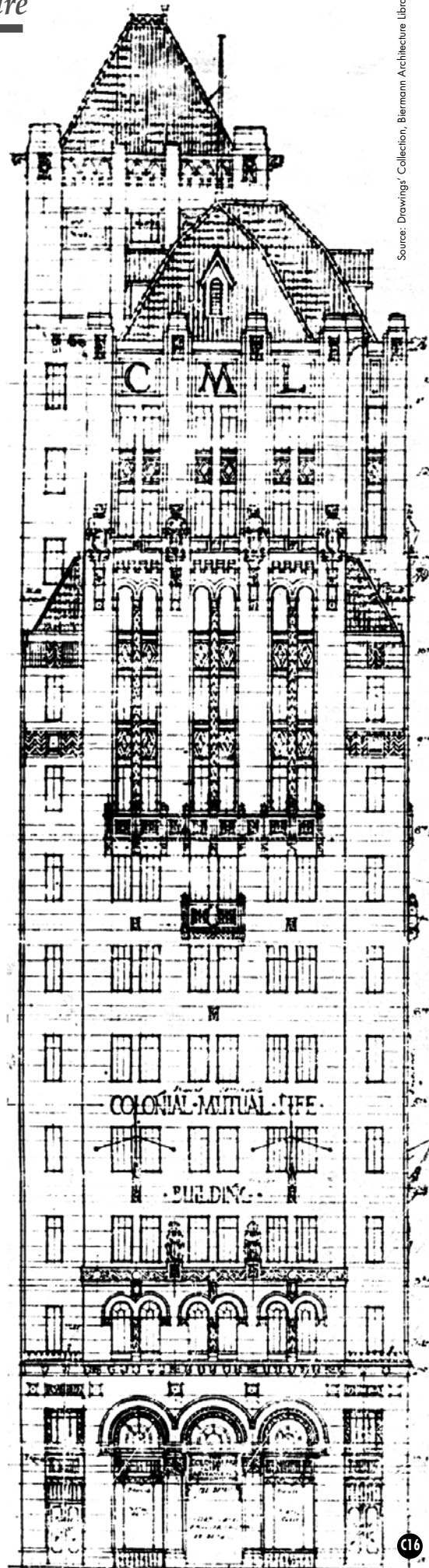
Due to the setting of Durban's Esplanade, adjacent the harbour and original beachfront, themes were drawn from both Mediterranean and sub-tropical Deco influences. Art Deco had become associated with

a burgeoning affluent society which, through the increase in ocean-liner travel, could indulge in excursions to exotic destinations. Quadrant House at 115 Victoria Embankment is a well-maintained example of Spanish Deco style, complete with a decorative element that resembles a sea-shell. Formerly a residence for the Merchant Navy's cadets, it now houses the corporate headquarters of a shipping line and its associated companies.

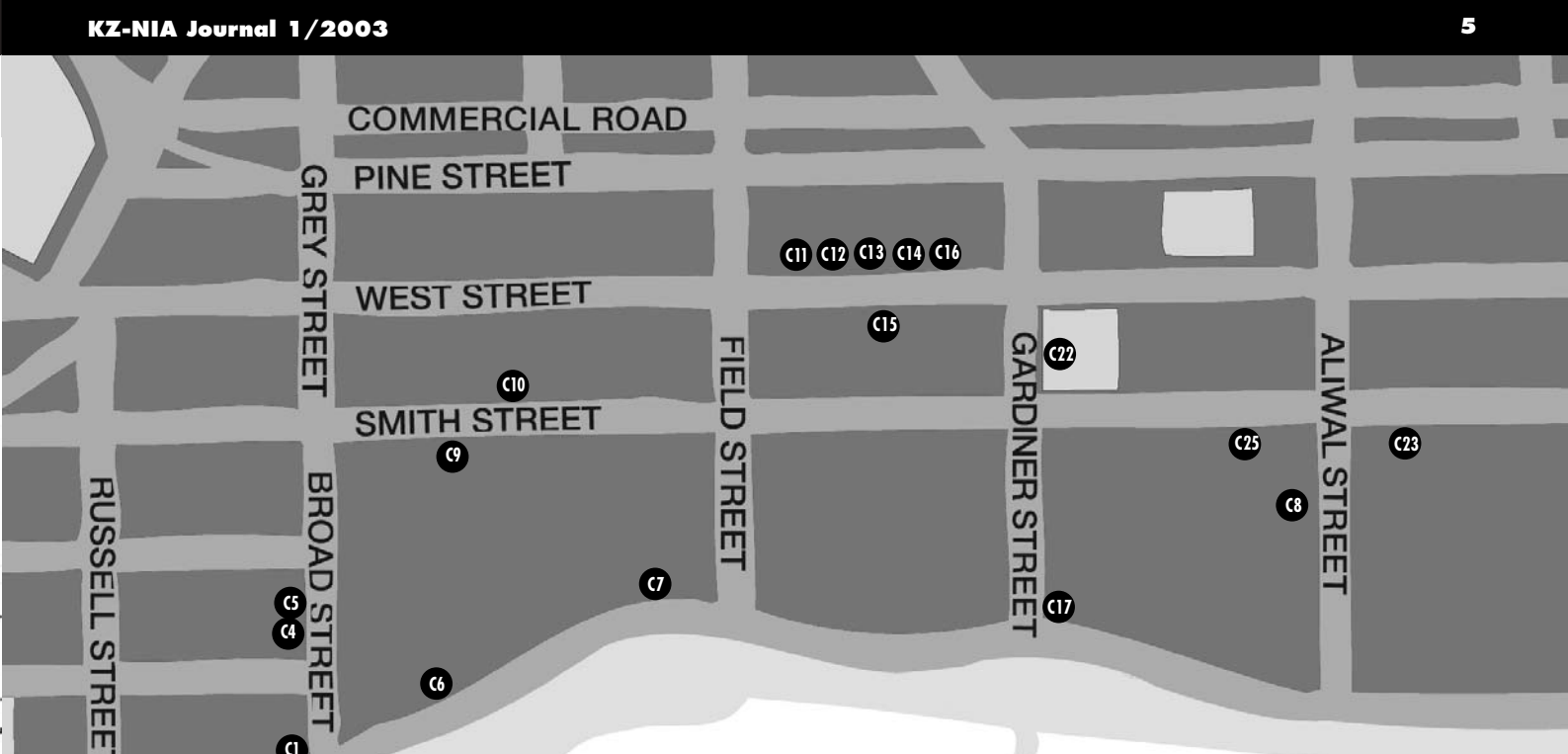
The influence of Miami Art Deco is evident in Willern Court at 157-159 Victoria Embankment, where the tropically themed stained glass panel is a contextual decorative companion to the adjacent tall palm trees. Victoria Mansions at 124 Victoria Embankment, with its vertical pilasters that rise through an arcuated first floor, also draws from its waterfront context in its Art Deco decorative elements. This is evident in the nautical, marine-animal and fantastical decorative elements, as well as the glazed panel above the entrance that commemorates the Union Castle mail ships. Nonetheless, Victoria Mansions does not escape the eclecticism within Art Deco, as it has a set of winged lions and eagles that resemble icons used by the Italian fascists.

The Albany Hotel at 225 Smith Street, is positioned adjacent to the Playhouse and the Prince's Theatre (incorporated in the Playhouse) and could have provided a venue for the burgeoning café and theatrical society of the time, with its ground floor café. The architectural representation of the hanging folds of stage curtains, which was evident in early American Art Deco buildings, is also present on the corner façade of the base of the Albany Hotel. This creates a strong architectural-theatrical dialogue with the adjacent Playhouse building. The café society as theatrical event is simulated through the exaggerated scale of the drapes and the exotic Mayan-influenced vertical elements that frame, and therefore monumentalise this theme.

Courtney Hart, Rakshni Moodley



Source: Drawings' Collection, Biermann Architecture Library



Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Grey Street Precinct

The evolution of the Grey Street precinct or the 'Indian CBD' dates back to the early 1870s when shop and shack settlements were established on the unoccupied land along the north-western fringe of central Durban.

The area took its name from the main street, Grey Street, after Sir George Grey, the Cape Governor who acting on behalf of a group of Natal farmers, initiated the process of recruiting labourers from India. On expiry of their indentures, many of these moved to Durban, as did 'passenger' Indians who settled in the area, stretching from Queen Street to Greyville Race Course bounded by the railway line on the east and West Street cemetery on the west.

The streetscapes are marked by colonnades and arcades which surmount the pavement and balconies above, many of which have become enclosed. Traditionally the ground floor was given over to retail facilities with residential accommodation above. Behind this front, narrow lanes, courts and light wells gave access to a veritable maze of accommodation.

Building activity peaked between the 1930s and 1945, and many buildings carry on their facades the owner's names (e.g. Jeena's Court, Devshi Court, and Valjee Buildings) as well as the year of construction. Most buildings are two or three-storied, corresponding with a characteristic of medieval towns: high density, low rise, mixed-use.

The low rise development is partly due to

the economic status of the developers and partly due to the policies at the time whereby large corporations invested in the white central Durban, where tall buildings such as Colonial Mutual began marking the skyline.

'Indo-African Deco' is the phrase we chose to describe the fusion of Indian and African details evident in many of the buildings in the Grey Street precinct, derived from the Indian developers freely expressing their economic independence. This Deco variant metamorphoses elements of Indian and Islamic architecture, with a rhythmic multiplication of round or horseshoe arches, single and coupled columns, balcony balustrade walls with openings, often resembling Union Jack designs. Detailing is geometric, perhaps due to the Moslem ban on human and animal representation, and horizontal bands stream-

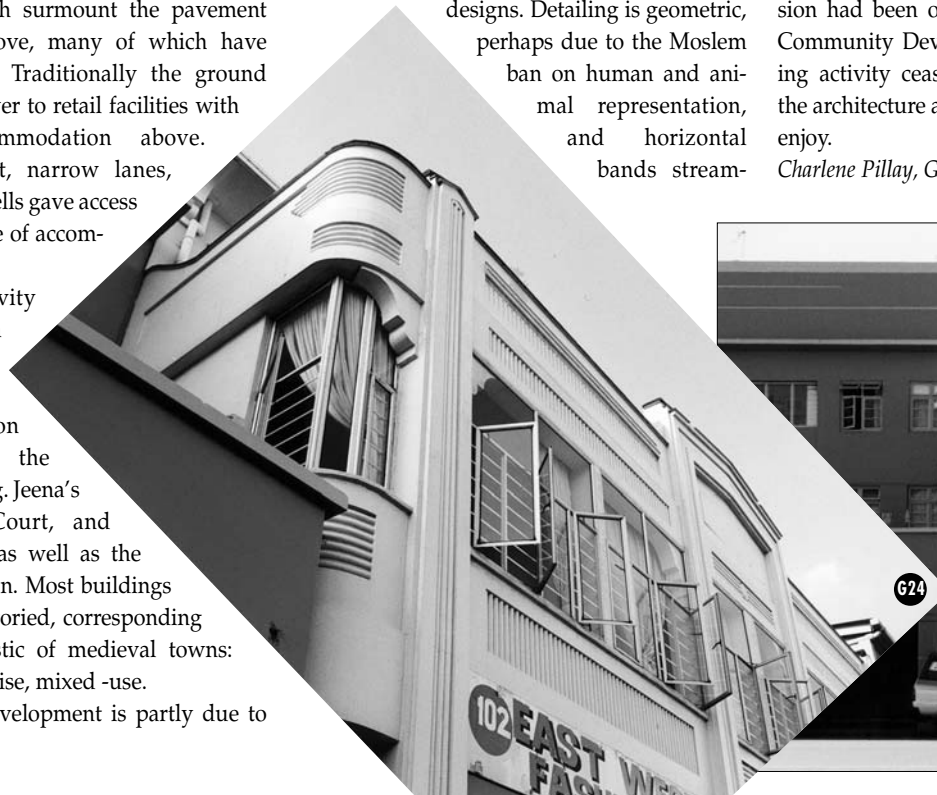
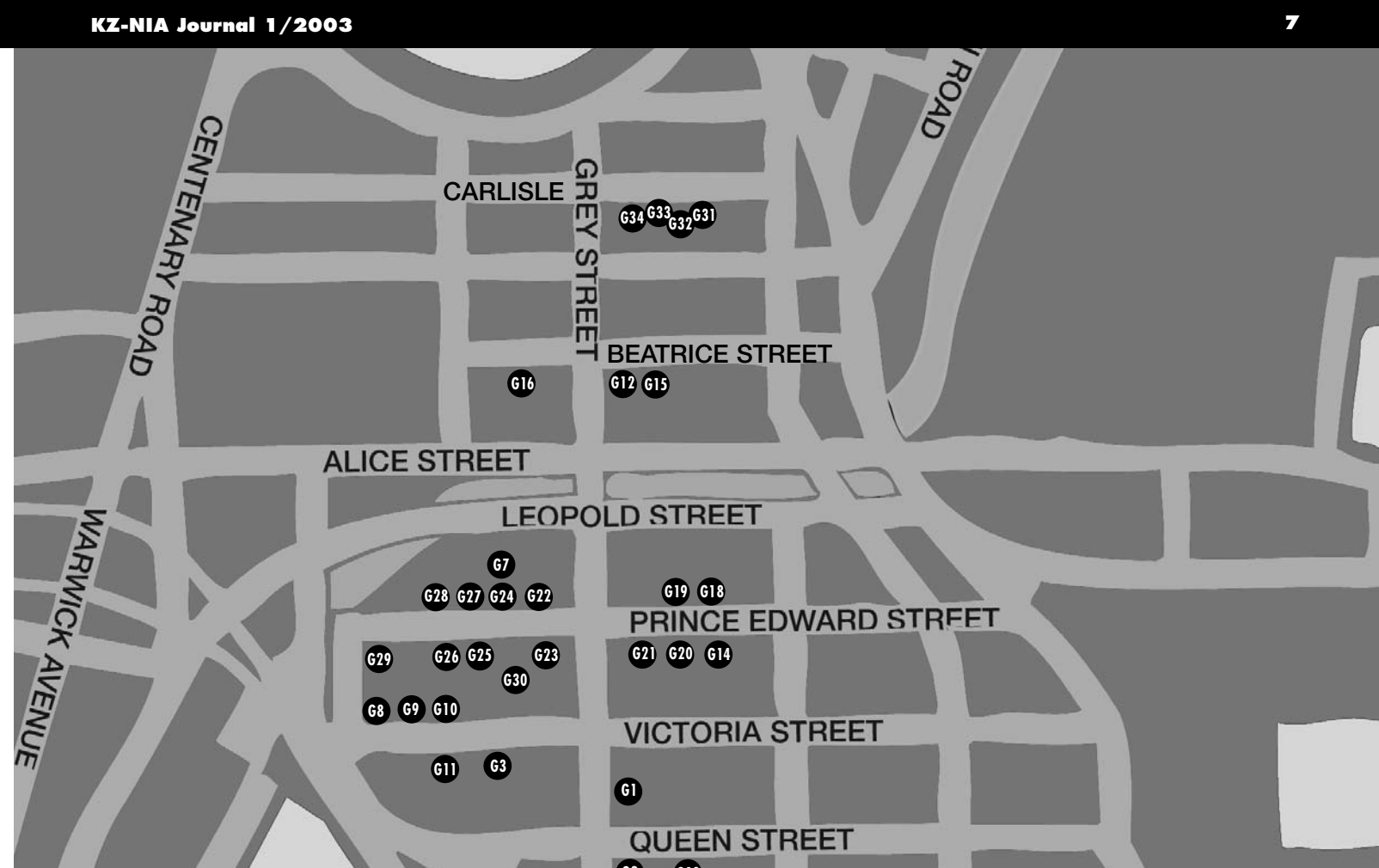
line the parapets of many of the buildings, especially those on corner sites. Grey Street became the prime business and residential area of the Indian sector of the Durban City center, and also the educational, cultural and business heart of the Natal Indian community. Indian businesses flourished during the period of the Second World War and much of their economic growth took place during this period. Subsequent to the passage of the Group Areas Act (no. 41 of 1950), the Grey Street area became proclaimed a 'controlled area' in 1957, and declared an Indian business area in 1973. The effect brought a freezing of all developments within the area, unless special permission had been obtained from the Minister of Community Development. As a result, building activity ceased, paradoxically preserving the architecture as a Deco district for us to now enjoy.

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Charlene Pillay, Gareth Davies



Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Berea

The rich and varied detailing of Art Deco architecture on the Berea is a reflection of the originality and complexity which went into the design of many of these 'classics'. Buildings which were previously designed in a 'British' atmosphere in the neo-Classical tradition, or in the Union Style, a blend of Cape Dutch and classical elements, were now embellished with geometric patterns stylised from Egyptian and Mayan themes as well as motifs of animals – with icons of eagles and vultures having been recently popularised by the opening of Tutankhamun's sarcophagus. Strong verticals were the order of the day, often terminating past the last horizontal lines of the buildings in some splendid detailing, reaching into the sky.

The Berea is roughly divided in two, split by the 1960s freeway canyon which enters and exits town underneath Tollgate bridge, so named because people had to pay a toll to enter town. Astride this is busy Berea Road, running east-west on either side of the freeway, the context of Berea Court, a multi-storey apartment building with excellent detailing, designed for the Langton family by architects Langton & Barboore in 1937. A stylised theme of wings is evident in the design, and lion figures have been used to much success.

In North Berea we find examples such as Surrey Mansions, designed by William B Barboore, also in 1937, with rich detailing in various layers of stucco relief, recalling the intricacy given the patterns found on Egyptian and Mayan tombs. Rounded corners soften this multi-storey apartment block and wonderful African lions with wings (griffons) adorn the three major elevations at high level. Further north, we find Cheviot Court in Musgrave Road, the streamlined form of this building resembling the new forms of ocean liners, automobiles and trains of the time. On the corner of Argyle and Musgrave Roads is Ainsdale Court, with a marvellous entrance drawing on powerful Mayan geometric forms.

In South Berea, a unique Art Deco 'precinct' is located in Woodburn Place, tucked away off Bulwer Road. Here, four different apartment buildings were built in a row, all in Art Deco style. They are less mainstream in their complexity of design and are toned down when compared to Surrey Mansions, but as a group they make this lane a special place in Berea's architectural heritage. Bearing names Ellan Vannin, Deo Volente, Alder Court and Pavo Court, they capture themes such as sunbursts and sea shells which were popular in Miami at the time, and are painted in various pinks, blues and yellows.

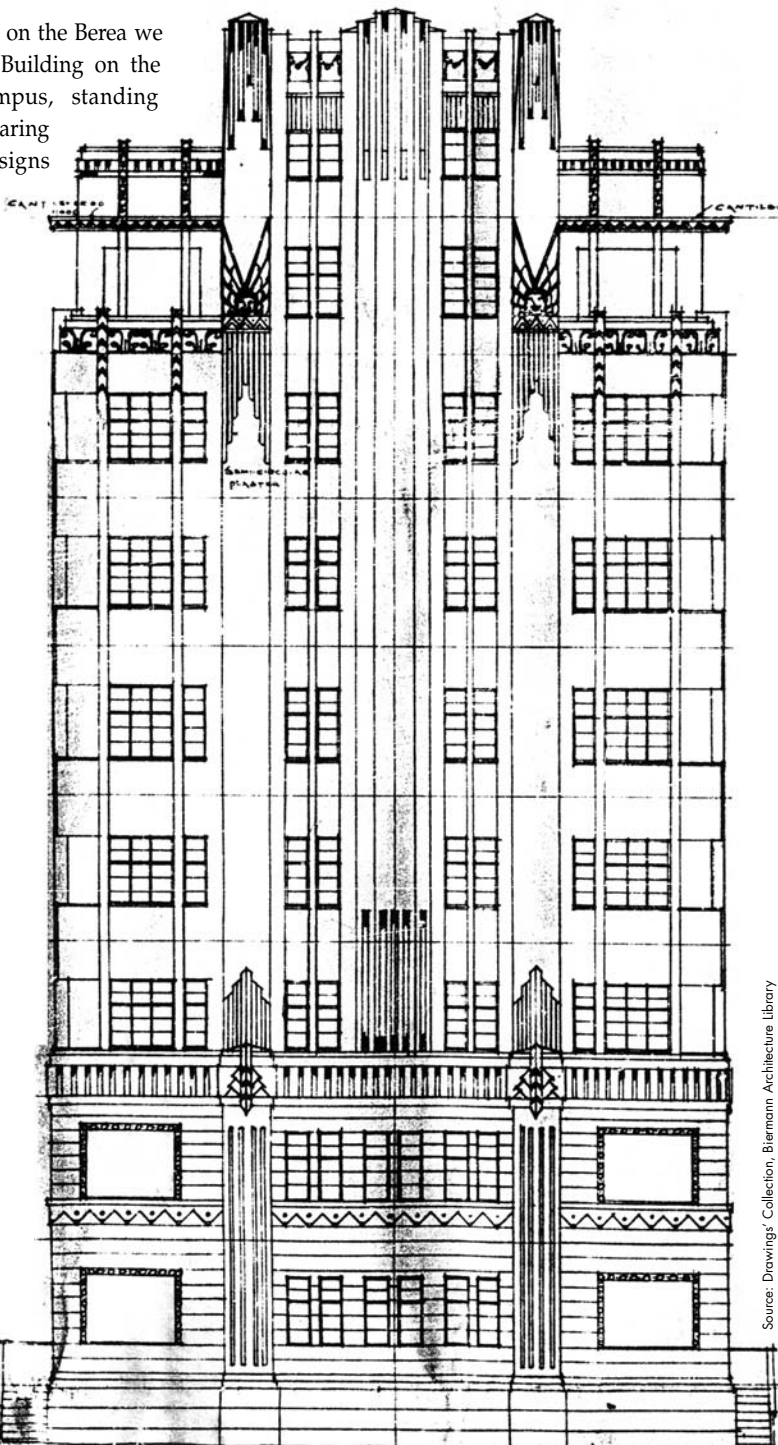
At the highest point on the Berea we find Memorial Tower Building on the Natal University campus, standing proud and tall and bearing strong geometrical signs found in Mayan ruins. Next to this is another rich Art Deco example – Howard College. The interior of the rotunda is in a collection of different themes, ranging from a nautical expression with ship's railings to the geometric floor pattern, to sea shells and other nature-inspired elements found in such fine details as the central skylight and intricately cast door handles.

In Umbilo Road we find the Mount Royal, an apartment block with a unique projecting triangular window feature above the entrance, above which

the motif of an eagle's wings are proudly spread. Further along Umbilo Road, we find Geoffrey le Seuer's Garvock Building, a solid looking apartment block, richly decorated and noted for its concave covered termination, in essence an Egyptian architectural element.

The Art Deco examples of Berea are of a very high standard. They reflect the vibrancy and excitement of the times and the effect that global trends have had on our culture and city.

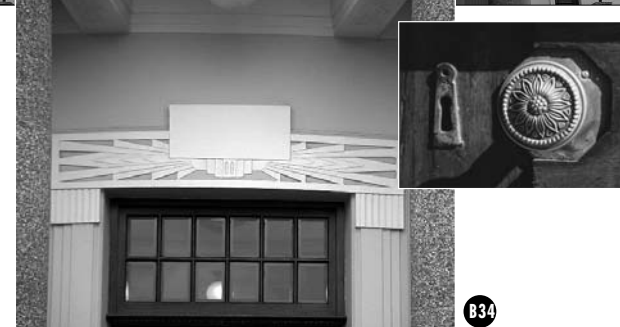
Justin Caramanus



Source: Drawings' Collection, Biermann Architecture Library



Berea Court depicted in this colour woodblock print by John Roome.



Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Art Deco Interiors & Accessories

Typical for Durban were marine motifs, which show the sea with ships or the harbour. These images often appeared in stained glass² of circular windows, resembling the porthole windows of ships. Indian influences abound in the decoration of buildings around the Grey Street area due to the high percentage of Indian people living there.

Motifs, which were typical in several kinds of Art Deco decoration are the sunburst, often applied to doors and facades as a sign for a new beginning, and streamlines which are a sign of speed and modernness, and therefore often found in car design or modern artifacts such as radios.

Art Deco in interior decoration is not only about the decoration of furniture and accessories such as door handles, lamps, windows etc. It is also about the creation of a different kind of space in the apartments. There is the example of the very well preserved penthouse in Berea Court that shows the intention of the architect (William B. Barbour) to create a more

open space that should give the impression of a bigger and brighter space than usual in other apartments during that time. When stepping out of the lift one finds oneself standing in the foyer that seems higher than it in fact is because of the roof light. On either side of the foyer a stepped and splayed arch leads to the private rooms of the apartment. The form of the arch connotes a bigger space by rising upwards. This was a common characteristic in Art Deco architecture. Sometimes architects even designed 'fake' storeys to make the building appear higher e.g. Surrey Mansions (by Langton and Barbour) in Currie Rd. This was to impress and to awe the people who looked up at the 'skyscraper'.

It is difficult to say who the designers and craftspeople were, but it is established that the number of people who were working in Durban in the field of decorative interior crafts increased significantly during the period from 1928 until 1945.

Durban is a city that was strongly influenced by Art Deco, possibly because it wanted to have an identity of its own alongside the strong influence of the British. Many Art Deco interiors can still be found, some in a poor condition that await restoration.

Anke Obenland

Ms Obenland is an exchange student from Universität Stuttgart who is spending 2002/03 at Natal. - Editor.

1. The proprietary name for a synthetic resin formed by the condensation of phenols and formaldehyde, used as a plastic and for insulating purposes, named after its inventor, LH Baekeland (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*).
2. Stained glass: Glass-painting is the term commonly used for the art by which windows are filled with 'stained glass'. As a rule such windows are built up of panels not too big for convenience in handling, composed of pieces of glass either dyed in its substance or superficially coloured, set together in a framework usually of lead, to form decorative or pictorial design (*Oxford Arts Dictionary*).

Fretted frieze on bathroom wall and elaborate bath foot on chequered tiles, Berea Court.



Coloured glass motif of sailing boats window in entrance foyer of Willern Court.



Boat in foreground of Durban's Bluff. Porthole window of penthouse of Berea Court.



Bottom: Light switch with stepped cover surround. Left: Recess for milk bottles, Berea Court. Below: Door furniture composed of backplate of stepped rectangles with consistent handle, Ellan Vannin.

Art Deco interior designs differ little from the Art Deco architecture. They subscribe to the same background and principles, except for the materials used. While the architects used conventional materials like glass, brick, stone, concrete and plaster, the interior designers, especially the furniture designers (who were usually also excellent craftsmen) used rare and expensive materials, like Macassar Ebony timbers, mother-of-pearl / abalone, ivory, tortoiseshell, lacquer, sharkskin or snakeskin, to decorate their exclusive and high quality designs. Later on, with the beginning of mass production, the materials also tended to be 'modern' eg chromium plated or Bakelite¹.

Like Art Deco architecture, interior design was also often based on the transformation of motifs from past centuries eg Gothic, Baroque or Medieval into the present. And it was also able to accommodate ornamental influences from historic, ethnic or religious motifs or ancient arts and cultures like Egyptian, Aztec, Japanese, Moroccan, Native American or African.



Pendant light fitting of coloured glass, Berea Court.

Pendant light fitting in penthouse of Berea Court. Note also the roof light above and the stepped and splayed archway in the background right.



Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Details Regionally Responsive



B14

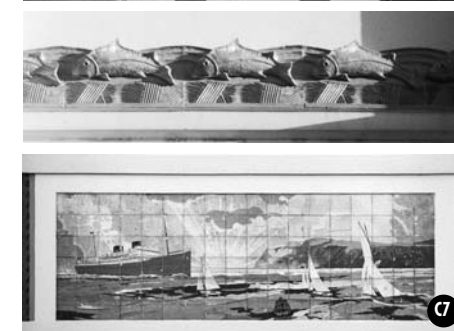


C7



B1

Durban has a sub-tropical climate, which no doubt has contributed to the development of a robust tradition of construction that mitigates in favour of strong, straightforward materials like brick, plaster and reinforced concrete. This is no place for timber filigree, unprotected metals or any design that embodies slender sections. Nevertheless, the skills developed by Edwardian artisans were readily applied to the stucco and brick detailing that the Art Deco architects required.



C7



C16

precinct, an area organically settled by people of Indian descent. This extends our definition of Durban Deco to include the vital and, in many cases, charming addition of voluptuous forms and eclectic detailing that resulted. Zig-zag and chevron detailing sits happily alongside the complex curves of gables that provide a backdrop to verandas that reach over the sidewalks, supported by columns bearing traces of Classical or Egyptian heritage. Hindu and Islamic motifs occur on spandrels whilst sunburst patterns illuminate from above.

World War II put an end to all this and we have had to wait sixty years to see the revival of interest in the Deco movement.

Dennis Claude

However, there were other factors in the equation. There was the fascination with African fauna and this stimulated the appearance of a unique range of animal forms that cropped up as stucco enrichment to the Deco forms on many buildings. Eagles and antelopes maintain a vigil from the heights of Colonial Mutual Building. Lions abound, dormant at the Cenotaph, alert on Berea Court and winged aloft on Surrey Mansions, metamorphosing into the griffons* of Enterprise building or Victoria Mansions that share the facades with fantastical fish and other legendary beasts. Serious vulture-like figures guard the entrance to Victoria Mansions whilst Broadwindsor is crowned with a pair of towering cranes seeking the sky above.

Then there was the cultural infusion injected by the rapid development of the Grey Street

* Mythical animals typically having the head and wings of an eagle and the body and tail of a lion. Also spelled griffon or gryphon. (Ching, F A *Visual Dictionary of Architecture*)



71 Beatrice Street.

Durban's Art Deco Architecture

Sun Coast Casino & Entertainment World

Since early on, the Natal Command headquarters terminated the northern extent of Durban's beachfront development. Beyond this, the city leased parts e.g. Village Green where a masonry proscenium and tented hall provided a much used venue; Animal Farm and Battery Beach pools (see *NPIA Journal* 1/1989). When the leases expired, this site was identified for a casino and these developments were demolished.

Bidding began in 1997 and protracted legal battles followed. Finally in December 2001 construction commenced and the first phase was opened a year later. The second phase which fronts the beach and includes cinemas, is to open in July 2003, and the final phase is to incorporate a 160-bed hotel. Sun Coast Casino is thus the biggest single private-sector investment ever undertaken on Durban's beachfront.

Any entertainment complex on such a site should attempt to link the city with the beach, as this concept does, albeit in Phase 2. The main entrance is from the west, where 2000

landscaped parking spaces are provided, with a secondary entrance from the north. These entrances terminate an L-shaped promenade with the two arms containing the 7000sq m casino replete with *salon prive* and private gaming rooms. To the south of the promenade are the 8 cinemas, the largest of which seats 500, as well as fast-food outlets. The knuckle of the 'L' accommodates a food court where a series of escalators link to the first floor conference facilities; and on the east, a series of restaurants open to terraces that face the ocean. Here the dunes have been re-established and give direct access to the beach. The basement is given over to servicing, administration and parking; the roof is a series of vaulted metal roofs.

The talking point of this development is the exterior, an Art Deco 'decorated shed'. This theme was proposed by the American 'theming architects', allegedly to extend Durban's Deco legacy, and thereby to revive interest in this heritage - which fortunately is happening. Thus the 45 colours to the Casino exterior and the 2.5 km of neon tubing - two small items in the budget of R1.4 billion!

Architects

MDS Architecture (Formerly Margoles Dukes & Smith), Johannesburg (Graeme Smith; Sean Pearce) and Langa Makhanya & Associates cc, Durban

Concept Architects

Creative Kingdom Inc, USA

Main Contractors

Grinaker-LTA Sivukile Joint Venture



West Elevation



North Elevation



Ground Floor Plan

- 1 West Entrance
- 2 North Entrance
- 3 Gaming Area
- 4 Smokers' Casino
- 5 Salon Prive
- 6 Private Gaming Rooms
- 7 Cinemas
- 8 Restaurants
- 9 Childrens' Games Room
- 10 Food Court
- 11 Amphitheatre

View Northward. Snell Parade veers inland (to left) allowing the Casino an uninterrupted link to the beach.



2002 Corobrik Student of the Year

At a function held at Durban's Royal Hotel on Friday, 7th March, Christiaan van Niekerk of the University of Pretoria was announced 2002 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year.

The jurors for this 16th national Award event, Messrs Jeremy Rose (Mashanbane Rose Architects, Johannesburg), Mpethe Morojele (MMA Architects (formerly Margoles Dukes & Smith), Johannesburg) and Dean Jay (Dean Jay & Associates, Durban) cited that Van Niekerk's Design Dissertation 'Extraneous' had "surpassed in detail of architectural resolution and clarity of presentation" the submissions by the five other Universities. The prize money for 2002 amounted to R27 500!

Preceding the announcement, Don Albert, Natal Regional recipient of 1994, presented his competition winning Millennium Tower on Durban's Bluff.

Left to right: Chairman of the jury, Jeremy Rose; Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year 2002, Christiaan van Niekerk; and Corobrik Managing Director, Peter de Treouv.



OBITUARIES

Brian Summerton 1941-2002

While a student at the University of Port Elizabeth, Brian Summerton began working with the local practice Steenkamp, Harris & Partners. Immediately on graduating in 1975, he was dispatched as Director of the Pietermaritzburg office of that practice, which in the meanwhile had been restyled as Interplan Architects. Involved first with buildings utilitarian in nature, Brian Summerton left his mark in the restoration of numerous historical buildings of Pietermaritzburg: Alexandra Road Police Station, Town Hill Hospital, various Voortrekker cottages, the City Hall, Main Post Office and the Legislative Assembly.

Due to his ability as an architect and the community involve-

ment in his adopted city, the writer of an obituary in a local newspaper* could conclude: "Our city needs more Brian Summertons, committed citizens who serve, self-effacingly and without any objective other than to make it better for all; citizens who are full of hope and optimism and give support to the leadership of the city, even if they may not always agree with the decisions made; citizens who find the city enjoyable as a place of life and work and are prepared to make a meaningful contribution to its welfare".

Brian is sorely missed by his family and friends, and all at Interplan. *Linda Norton and Louis Grové*

*Layman, A City loses an avid supporter. *The Mirror*, 8th January 2003



Jessie Birss 1926-2003

A graduate in both Architecture and Town Planning at Natal, Jessie Maya Birss worked on the 'Holford Plan' (Durban 1985) before commencing as a Senior Lecturer at her *alma mater* from which she retired in 1987.

Jessie was the first woman to be elected to the Provincial Committee of this Institute, serving two consecutive terms 1976-77 and 78-79. She loved to travel and explore the world of architecture, having a special penchant for the study of urban settlements in history.

Having gained a reputation for language punctiliousness, she became for many years proof-reader of this Journal, unfortunately only to learn that in matters English, architects were no better than students!

Walter Peters, Editor

School of Architecture, University of Natal

PROGRAMMES' DIRECTOR

Mrs Alethea Duncan-Brown has been appointed Programmes' Director for both the BAS and BArch degree Programmes for one year beginning 1st March 2003.

2003 PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY

At the Prize-Giving ceremony of the Built Environment Disciplines held on campus on Monday, 31st March, the following KZ-NIA prizes for the best students in each Year were awarded by the President, Mr Mohideen Abdul Gafoor:

Bachelor of Architectural Studies

Year 1 *Barrie Biermann Prize*: Marco Riemensberger

Year 2 *Gordon Small Prize*: Mrs Erica Coskey

Year 3 *Calvert McDonald Prize*: Simbareshe Bako

Bachelor of Architecture (Advanced)

Year 1 (4) *Clement Fridjlon Prize*: Ms Tiffany Murray

Year 2 (5) *SN Tomkin Prize*: Suhail Ballim

David Haddon Prize

The SAIA and Association of SA Quantity Surveyors Prize which commemorates the untimely death of the national President of the combined organisations, David Haddon (1905-59) - who also held the unique distinction of being elected to that high office on 3 occasions - is dedicated to the Best Student in the subject Professional Practice. This year the recipient is BArch student, Ms Lindsay Nunes.

Geoffrey Le Sueur Scholarship

This prestigious travel scholarship could this year be awarded two BArch graduates: Ms Shannon Roydon-Turner who wishes to explore the Brazilian town of Curitiba; and David Louis who intends studying the architecture of Eastern Europe.

Brian Bernstein Scholarship

After receiving the bound report from the inaugural recipient, Ms Mizan Rambhoros, on behalf of the family, Prof Ted Tollman presented the 2nd Bernstein Travel Scholarship to BAS graduate Ms Jodi Davids, who has made the upliftment of underprivileged youth a personal mission.

Sherwood-Bond Bursary

Former librarian of the Barrie Biermann Architecture Library, Mrs Hazel Bond, presented the 2003 bursary to final Year BAS student Ms Nandipha Baduza.

Garth Moyes Prize for Good Fellowship

This award in memory of Garth Moyes (1970-94), a 4th Year student who died suddenly, is awarded annually to the student identified by the 4th Year class as having contributed most to good fellowship. The Award for the class of 2002 went to Aveshen Pillay.

2003 GRADUATION

At the graduation ceremony of the Faculty of Community and Development Disciplines of the University of Natal, held on Tuesday, 1st April, the following degrees in Architecture were conferred:

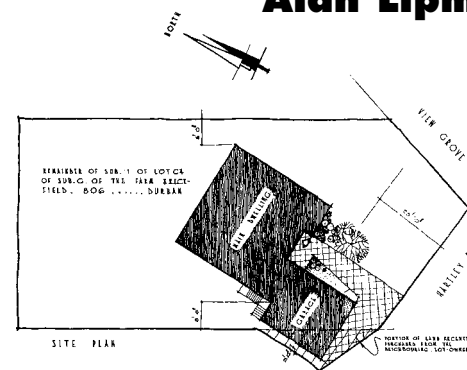
Bachelor of Architectural Studies

Among the 27 graduates, the degrees of Messrs Simbarashe Bako and Ross Smyth were conferred *cum laude*.

Bachelor of Architecture (Advanced)

Among the 36 graduates, the degrees of Messrs Suhayl Ballim and Naem Cassim were conferred *cum laude* and that of Ms Leonie Merviss *summa cum laude*.

Alan Lipman D Arch (honoris causa) (Natal)



House Bughwan, 76 Hartley Road, 1960.

Site Plan: So concerned was the young tyros that he persuaded the owners to acquire a portion of the neighbouring property for reasons of orientation. Architect: Alan Lipman.



Photo from below:

Prompted by the severe fall of the site the elevational photograph automatically became perspectival.

At the 2003 graduation ceremony of the Faculty of Community & Development Disciplines of the University of Natal, an honorary doctorate in Architecture was conferred upon Alan Lipman.

The following is extracted from the laudation: Architect, designer, academic, writer-critic and sociologist: Alan Lipman has brought a unique interdisciplinary approach to architecture that has had a substantial impact on architectural education and on the built environment.

After 26 years in exile following his banning in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, Lipman returned in 1990 to the challenges of a new South Africa. These he engaged constructively, by communicating his pioneering concepts of community architecture and advocacy planning to a wide audience. He has led by example, providing senior mentoring, juror and advisory consultancies, many in KwaZulu-Natal.

Lipman was sent to Durban in 1953, as a young architect who had completed his BArch at Witwatersrand University, to open a branch office. Buildings that remain today that were designed by him include West Walk (1958); the Meer Family house (1960) at

148 Burnham Rd, Clare Hills; and the Bughwan Family house (1960) at 76 Hartley Rd, Overport.

In 1948 he had interrupted his Architectural studies to serve as a volunteer during Israel's War of Independence; in 1963 he found himself banned in his own country and unable to teach. Together with his wife, Beate, he went into political exile in the United Kingdom, where he accepted a lectureship in Architecture at the University of Wales, Cardiff. There he was appointed to a Personal Chair, served as Dean of the Faculty for six years, and retired in 1989 as *Emeritus* Professor.

While in Wales Lipman completed his master's degree and doctorate, the latter in Sociology at University College, Cardiff, as a part-time student. He then launched a groundbreaking course in 'Human Studies in Architecture' at the Welsh School. Together with colleagues in Sociology and Applied Psychology, the course focused on applying social, cultural, psychological and physiological - or ergonomic - studies to architectural work. This directed students' attention to both societal and individual consequences of building design, an innovative concept recognised by the Board of Education of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It resulted in parallel developments at Schools of Architecture as far afield as Australia, Sri Lanka, Spain and North America, as well as in Britain.

Visiting professorships in India, Australasia, the United States, and in Kitwe, Zambia, followed. More than 35 Masters and PhD theses were awarded, over three decades, in this field under his supervision.

On his return to South Africa in 1990 and after taking early retirement at the age of 64, Lipman spent nine more active years in university teaching, first serving as Visiting Professor of Architecture at the University of Natal in Durban. In addition, he continued to carry out research and long-term consultancy for both official and informal community-oriented organisations in South Africa, including the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights where he was Research Consultant to the Regional Land Rights Commissioner of

Gauteng, until January 1998.

Lipman writes architectural columns for various journals and popular newspapers in a determined effort to popularise social, spatial and architectural issues, and he maintains an annual rate of four to five serious papers, many on community architecture and advocacy planning. He has served on



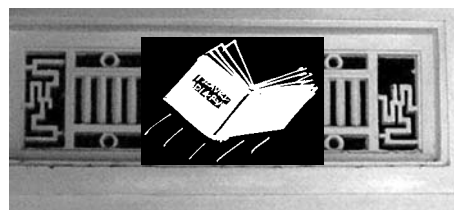
House Meer, 148 Burnwood Road, Clare Hills, 1960. In the contemporaneous Brazilian mode, the residence has a splayed front to the bedroom wing, suspended on pilotis. Architects: Bernard Janks, Green & Lipman. Section: The mono-pitched roofs of House Meer combine a butterfly section with a split level and a clerestory.

various Editorial Boards and has contributed some 180 published articles.

The practice of Alan Lipman & Henry Paine Architects concerns itself with what Lipman regards as 'socially acceptable commissions'. These include a communication suite for the Congress of South African Trade Unions; a primary school in Turnahole, Parys; a neighbourhood health clinic in Kagiso, Krugersdorp; a head office for the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa in Newtown, Johannesburg; and the Workers' Museum and Resource Centre, also in Newtown. The last named earned two coveted architectural awards: the Conservation Merit Award for 1995 and the Award of Excellence for 1995/96, both conferred by the Institute of South African Architects. He has been a juror of national and international architectural competitions, and was called upon to evaluate the Cato Manor project for its European Union sponsors (2000). Lipman currently acts as design mentor for the Africa Centre for Population Studies & Maternal Health at Somkhele, a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal.

The University of Natal honours Alan Lipman for his architectural capabilities as a designer, academic and writer-critic, for his deep integrity; for his excellence in the enhancement of academic learning; and in promoting the progress of human society.

In receiving the degree, Alan Lipman joined the following list of honorary graduates in Architecture of the University of Natal: Prof Ronald Lewcock, 1998; Revel Fox, 1993; James Walton, 1987; and Lord William Holford, 1957. -Editor



A Travel Diary
Vietnam

Vietnam occupies the eastern strip of the South East Asian peninsular, about 2500km long and no more than a few hundred kilometres wide in the middle. Ho Chi Min City/Saigon is the main southern city and the home of the American occupation. Hot most of the year, hectic and busy. Hanoi, our chosen destination, is the more sedentary northern sister, cultural and administrative capital and home of the Vietcong, made famous by Jane Fonda's visit and radio announcements at the height of the Vietnam war. (the American war according to the locals)

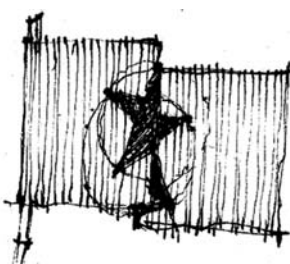
From the air the first thing you notice is water, lots of it – massive meandering rivers, countless flooded rice paddies and from the ground it becomes doubly clear that existence

here is intimately bound up with the stuff. Building sites and inter-city roads are literally raised above the flood plain with plinths of stone. Even bodies are buried in shrines above ground to escape the interminable ebb and flow of the water table.

Water also features in the city of Hanoi which is built around several lakes, the central one being Hoan Kiem (below). We headed for the Old Quarter which hugs the northern half of the lake while the new colonial/modern city has been constructed to the south.

The Old Quarter is a hive of small streets and narrower lanes jam-packed with traders, coffee shops, vendors selling almost anything, buildings and street poles festooned liberally with the iridescent Vietnamese Flag (red with a yellow 5 pointed star). Roads are clogged with the ubiquitous Honda that seems to have become the vehicle of choice for the young in so many asian cities. We counted as many as five people on a single motorcycle! Crossing the narrowest street becomes a supreme test of faith – look straight ahead and walk, slowly.

Streets in the quarter are named after the predominant product traded there – Silk,



Silver, Bamboo, Clay and Tin. Tube or Tunnel houses, the result of a sensible policy of levying rates and taxes on street frontage, can be four or six levels above the street and only two to three meters wide. A hundred hotels with spotless, double-roomed, airconned, bathroomed, bar-fridged, and satellite TVed for about \$10 a night.

The quarter is 'Green' in every sense of the word. Humidity that makes Durban feel like the Karoo, familiar flamboyants (*Delonix Regia au Madagascar*) crowd the narrow streets, light green fern-like foliage and tell tale crimson flowers, every conceivable pavement nook and balcony ledge sporting massive blue and white glazed ceramic pots with plants and bonsai trees of every shape and size, cascading orchids from 2nd and 3rd level balconies, massive strangler-figs announcing the position of the numerous buddist pagodas (Temples are places of learning – Pagodas, places of worship).

Across the lake, the other city, with wide French streets, treed open pavements, violent ochre-orange colonial-baroque buildings behind heavy wrought iron pickets and green manicured lawns, cheek by jowl with modernist austere unadorned gunmetal grey concrete edifices memorialising this or that, built no doubt with money from the Soviet Union in the 60s and 70s. In between and alongside all this, the Vietnamese people, ever industrious, friendly, overly trusting and open.

There are few Americans on the street but the US dollar is king and buys anything and everything. Counterfeit music CDs from China for a Dollar, Woollies quality red 'T' shirts with the yellow star for the same, sweet black coffee, cheap draft beer, meals of charred veggies on noodles and paper-thin spring rolls, silk suits made in under four hours for the price of a pair of Diesel boxers, fine bamboo and laquerware to feast one's eyes on. Shop till you drop!

We day tripped to the Perfume Pagoda (top right), an hour by

bus, another by flat bottomed sampan along an inland waterway, two hour hike through thick bamboo forests to the holiest shrine in North Vietnam. A huge cave with an 8m stalactite (or is that mite?) considered a Buddha in it's own right by the faithful.

We overnight trained to Sapa in the north-west corner of the country, close to both Laos and China, and trekked through terraced rice paddies to hill tribe villages of the Red Dzaio



Colonial baroque buildings behind heavy wrought iron pickets and green manicured lawns.

and the Black Humong (top right). Vietnam is dominated by the Kung tribe – modern Vietnamese – (85%) who historically occupy the flat, low, wet lands. The hills along the western and Northern borders are home to about 25 minorities, many of whom are refugees and spill-overs from China, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

A 'luxury' over night bus took us south through the DMZ, the military border between North and South, a 200 kilometers wide band where nothing grows – a tropical wasteland thanks to the millions of gallons of Napalm and Agent Orange dished out during the war. We stayed in Hoi An, a delightful, laid back fishing village with ancient wooden houses built by Japanese traders, romantic waterside pavement cafes and at nearby MySon, the 1200 year old Cham dynasty Hindu temple ruins built interestingly out of brick

Popular building seemed to fall into three distinct time/style zones. PRE-SOCIALIST – quaint, ochre and turquoise painted vernacular houses, unadorned, simple, with practical emphasis on ventilation, decorative slots and vents.

SOCIALIST – modern, modulated, sun-screened, sharp-lined, concrete administrative buildings, schools, and hospitals, gone black with mould and neglect, always offset by the ever-present flag. POST SOCIALIST – colourful, exuberant, stainless steel balustraded kitch, highly decorated, complex plaster mouldings, rounded lines, romantic and affluent.

Vietnam has fought wars against the Chinese, French, Cambodians and Americans and has yet to be defeated. Emerging only recently from years of distrustful, insular socialist malaise the economy is booming. Massive infra-structural projects are underway – four-lane highways replacing two-lane mountain paths, huge resort hotels scarring mountainsides – and it becomes clear from these that the current vision for tourism in

the country has been borrowed from southern neighbour, Thailand. Perhaps the war with the Americans may ultimately be lost on the altar of globalism. Good-luck Vietnam!

Derek van Heerden

Derek and Sharon van Heerden visited Vietnam a second time around in September 2002. –Editor

